USIB-D-41.14/7
(COMOR-D-48/21)

4 February 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: United States Intelligence Board

SUBJECT: COMOR Recommendation on Satellite Scheduling

1. The Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance in pursuance of the request of the United States Intelligence Board (see USIB-D-41.14/4, COMOR-D-48/20) has, with the cooperation of the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) reviewed the schedule for satellite photographic and electronic systems for the period through June 1964. Submitted as Tab A is a revision of the NRO schedule for satellite photographic and electronic systems. The COMOR recommendations on this are in paragraph 7 below.

2. Other actions pertinent to requirements guidance for the NRO are summarized as follows:

a. To assist in further research and development planning, a statement of the essential elements of information and the requirement for the resolution desired for satellite photography submitted to the NRO

on 28 August 1962 (COMOR-D-61/1). This still constitutes valid guidance for research and development.

b. With regard to the electronics systems section of the schedule, COMOR believes that at this time it will meet requirements. However, a new statement of requirements is in the process of preparation and will be forwarded as soon as completed.

c. COMOR has completed and forwarded to the D/NRO the targeting guidance for programming the L mission scheduled for February. COMOR will continue to provide specific guidance for each of these missions.

d. The USIB has notified NRO of the requirement for an ARGON mission in April to be followed by one in June if required.

3. In studying this program in cooperation with the NRO, COMOR was advised that the present schedule for photographic systems is not in competition with the electronic systems schedule or vice versa.

4. COMOR believes that, in evaluating the adequacy of the photographic systems schedule, the schedule for L [redacted] is adequate. These programs, it should be understood, are not a substitute for, but are complementary to, the M or J programs. Our

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needs for search and surveillance will be but little affected even if the L [redacted] successful in coverage of high priority targets. COMOR feels that inasmuch as the L program is an interim and limited program, comment on it would not be construc-

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tive. [redacted]

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5. Our present major concern in the photographic field, therefore, is to evaluate the adequacy of the search and surveillance program for which the M and J systems were designed. Experience since the inception of the satellite program has furnished a basis for determining the frequency of coverage in general needed to satisfy most of our highest priority intelligence requirements using the present system in operation. In establishing the intervals at which this coverage should be obtained, the following factors were considered:

a. The average time lapses permissible in coverage of the various types of targets,

b. The average optimum time lapses for purposes of comparative coverage, and

c. The time required to process and interpret the results of a mission to a degree which will permit

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review of the highest priority objectives and revision or refinement of the target file and photo interpretation requirements.

6. The revised NRO schedule for the J-type satellite reflecting use of 4 of the spare systems as shown in the revision of Tab A is an adequate approach for satisfying the intelligence community requirement for a search and surveillance program conducted through satellite photography. (COMOR notes that failure of the J system would require the substitution of 2 M systems for every J in the schedule as revised if the requirement is to be met.) The revision takes into account the need for increasing surveillance during the good weather periods of 1963 and the first half of 1964, times which are optimum for maximum photographic collection. In summary, it should provide:

a. Potential coverage of priority targets at 10-day intervals during summer months when daylight and weather conditions are favorable;

b. Potential coverage of priority targets at 15-day intervals during the winter months, when adverse weather conditions and inadequate daylight render missions less productive.

7. The Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance has been concerned that there should be available on a continuing standby a

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satellite reconnaissance capability for emergency, such as was faced by the United States Intelligence Board in the Berlin crisis of 1961 and the Cuban crisis of 1962. It is COMOR's feeling that even under the best of circumstances, satellite reconnaissance both today and in the foreseeable future cannot produce information on a sufficiently timely basis to serve as an "indication source" as the term is normally used. However, in a continuing cold-war crisis period, even with the time lapse between launch and readout satellite reconnaissance can provide valuable intelligence information that could be critical in policy decisions. It is for this reason that COMOR submits for USIB consideration and approval the recommendation below in paragraph 8b.

8. Recommendations:

a. That the United States Intelligence Board concur in the NRO schedule as revised (see Tab A). The additional missions proposed will provide needed intelligence coverage during the good-weather months (July and September) in 1963 and the good-weather months up to mid-64 (April and June).

b. That a standby reconnaissance capability be provided for use on call in crisis situations. This satellite system should incorporate a vehicle programmed against the type of targets designated as

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possible indicators during the tension last October

25X1 [redacted] These would be relatively few in number and the plan would be to program in such a manner as to cover a broad and representative selection of targets, and as many as possible, during each day's orbits. This capability should include provision for immediate replacement of vehicles fired and a means for these vehicles taking priority over other firings in the U.S. satellite schedule.

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James Q. Reber
Chairman
Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance

Attachment: "Schedule"--distributed only to USIB members and COMOR members.

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(COMOR-D-48/21)
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